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NT 640 Exegesis of General Epistles

ROUGH Draft – Books are finalized; schedule is not

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Spring 2006
3 semester units
Monday: 5:30–8:15

Description: A close reading of James, 1 Peter, and Jude with special attention given to literary, socio-historical, and theological understandings of the epistles.

Prerequisites: NT 500 or 501/502; NT 520; and, NT (IBS) 510 or 511.

Objectives: By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Employ a range of exegetical approaches relevant to the interpretation of the General Epistles and apply those approaches to other NT books of similar genre;
- Understand the General Epistles within their socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts;
- Identify central issues in the critical study of the General Epistles;
- Articulate the importance of one's own presuppositions in the task of interpretation and understand the implications of Wesleyan presuppositions about Scripture;
- Articulate primary theological and ethical concerns of General Epistles;
- Demonstrate awareness of how the theological and ethical concerns of the General Epistles contribute to those of the canon and of constructive theology and ethics;
- Differentiate between critical, homiletic, and devotional commentaries; and
- Evaluate critically the usefulness of secondary literature in the study of the NT.

Concise Greek Students should be able to:

- Use Greek-based language tools to demonstrate proficiency in lexical semantics;
- Use Greek-based language tools to identify grammatical constructions (i.e, with regard to sentence structure and use of clauses);
- Use Greek-based language tools to engage in syntactical analyses (i.e, with regard to verbal aspect, mood, and voice; use of the genitive and dative cases).

Course Requirements and Reading:

- Class preparation, attendance, and participation (5%): Each student should prepare for each class by (1) carefully reading the assigned texts, (2) making their own notes on the text, and (3) comparing their observations with those made in one of the required commentaries below. The attendance policy is that any more than 6 absences will result in a failing grade.
- Annotated chapter outlines of James (3% x 5 = 15%): For each chapter of James, you will make an annotated outline of the chapter. See the rubric attached for further details about what constitutes an outstanding annotated outline.

- Interpretive Assignments (10% x 3 = 30%): On 2 class sessions prepare in advance and turn in at the beginning of the session an interpretive assignment addressing a pericope within the chapter assigned for that class session. Interpretive assignments should be approximately 4 double spaced pages (i.e., approx. 1,000 words). For more information on these assignments see the document in my folder on the intranet.
- Theological Assignment (30%): On 1 class session prepare in advance a paper of approximately 8 double spaced pages (i.e., approx. 2,000 words) showing *either* how the theology of a particular General Epistle contributes to the canon *or* how a chapter or pericope within the book contributes to the overall theology of the epistle itself. Students who choose to complete this assignment in groups of two or three (turning in one assignment for the group) will raise their grade by one later grade (e.g., from B to B+). Students desiring suggestions and comments prior to final submission of their assignment may submit a penultimate draft no later than Nov. 15.
- Commentary Review (20%): Write a critical review comparing and contrasting at least two of the required commentaries below. The commentary review should be between 5-6 pages in length (i.e., approx. 1,250-1,500 words). General guidelines on book reviews are available in my folder on the Intranet. Students desiring suggestions and comments prior to final submission of their assignment may submit a penultimate draft no later than Oct. 12.

Required Reading:

Reese, Ruth Anne. *Jude and 2 Peter*. [This will be available via the Intranet, details to be provided in class.]

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Letter of James*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1995 (Wipf & Stock).

Maynard-Reid, Pedrito U. *Poverty and Wealth in James*. Wipf & Stock.

Required: pick one for each epistle

James

Law, Sophia. *The Epistle of James*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1980.

Martin, Ralph. *James*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word, 1988.

Wall, Robert. *Community of the Wise*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.

2 Peter & Jude

Bauckham, Richard. *Jude, 2 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word, 1983.

Green, Michael. *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*. 2nd, ed. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987.

Neyrey, Jerome. *2 Peter, Jude*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993.

Recommended Reading

Bauckham, Richard. *James*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Bede. *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*. Trans. David Hurst. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publishers, 1985.

- Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*. Trans. John Owen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948.
- Chester, Andrew and Ralph Martin. *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*. New Testament Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- deSilva, David. *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2000.
- Green, Joel B. *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Hartin, Patrick J. *A Spirituality of Perfection: Faith in Action in the Letter of James*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999.
- Rodríguez, Raúl Humberto Lugo. "'Wait for the Day of God's Coming and Do What You Can to Hasten It...' (2 Pet 3:12): The Non-Pauline Letters as Resistance Literature." *Subversive Scriptures*, Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International 1997.
- Schertz, Mary and Perry Yoder. *Seeing the Text: Exegesis for Students of Greek and Hebrew*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.
- Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Wesley, John. "On Friendship with the World" Sermon 80. Available at http://wesley.nnu.edu/john_wesley/sermons/080.htm
- "On Patience" Sermon 83. Available at http://wesley.nnu.edu/john_wesley/sermons/083.htm

Note on purchasing commentaries: I recommend that you have at least one commentary for each of the General Epistles. My recommendation if you are considering purchasing only one commentary would be that you make use of multiple commentaries in the library and then purchase a commentary after you have decided which one you find provides you with helpful information in an accessible format.

Grading Criteria

Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (catalog, p. 24):

- A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives
- B= Good work: substantial achievement of course objectives
- C= Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives
- D= Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives
- F= Unacceptable work: failure of course work

A plus (+) or minus (-) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C- = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

You will receive letter grades from me. These are the numbers I use with those grades.

A+ = 98-100	A = 95	A- = 92
B+ = 88	B = 85	B- = 92
C+ = 78	C = 75	C- = 72
D+ = 68	D = 65	D- = 62
F = TBD		

Most of the assignments in this course have multiple opportunities for completion. For example, there are 6 opportunities to complete the 3 required interpretive assignments. You may complete more than 3 either for more practice or to raise your grade. I will count the three highest grades toward the final grade. This is true for all assignments that have multiple opportunities for completion.

In addition, I have prepared rubrics (guides) for a number of the assignments that should assist you in evaluating your work prior to turning it in. You may find it helpful to use these rubrics in discussion with other classmates. I have worked on preparing these materials so that it will be clear what type of work I am looking for and to make clear the educational goals of the class.

Instructions for Assignments

Annotated chapter outlines:

Chapter outlines should note major points, significant linkages, sub-points, and other items of note. For each notation that you make, you will provide a one or two sentence explanation of how the point you are making relates to the rest of the chapter or section. Does it highlight a significant link or break? Does it lead from one point of discussion to another? Is there a thematic connection or a grammatical connection. In other words, what has led you to note this as a point of interest or significance in your outline? The end of each outline should conclude with several (approximately 2-4) exploratory questions raised by your observations. You might think of these as questions for further study. Absolute maximum length 2 single spaced typed pages in outline format.

Commentary Review:

The commentary review is a book review that compares and contrasts two or more commentaries. Extensive comments on the expectations for a book review along with sample reviews are available in the class folder.

Theological Assignment:

The theological assignment shows *either* how the theology of a particular General Epistle contributes to the canon *or* how a chapter or pericope within the book contributes to the overall theology of the epistle itself. This assignment should demonstrate both sound exegesis and interpretation of either a passage within a given epistle or a broad understanding of the whole of a given epistle and the relationship between the exegetical work and the theological significance of the material at hand. The paper is expected to contain properly cited references and any outside resources needed.

Course Schedule

Feb 6	Introduction to Exegesis
Feb 13	Exegetical Approaches to the General Epistles: Demonstration in Jude
Feb 20	A Theological Approach to Jude
Feb 27	Introduction to 2 Peter; 2 Peter 1
Mar 6	2 Peter 2
Mar 13	2 Peter 3
Mar 20	Theology of Jude & 2 Peter
Mar 27	Introduction to James; James 1 Due: Outline 1
APRIL 3-7	READING WEEK
Apr 10	James 2 Due: Outline 2; Interpretive Assignment # 1: James 1:2-27 or James 2:1-26
Apr 17	James 3-4 Required: Commentary Due: Outlines 3 & 4; Interpretive Assignment # 2: James 3:1-12 or 3:13-4:10
Apr 24	James 4-5 Required: Commentary Due: Outline 5; Interpretive Assignment # 3: James 4:11-5:6 or James 5:12-20
May 1	James 5; Theology of James
May 8	Wrap-up General Epistles Exegesis and Theology
May 15	Finals